Dec 15, 1976

1:14 INCARNATION.

John 1:And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

The sermon by the 11 yr old girl evangelist. Jesus, the Light of the world. The text.

The fact of the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, accepted by practically all Xns, was one of the main points of disputes between me and my father.

The thot of the whole of God being within the man Jesus, himself subject to physical limitations and human environment, was too much for my boy mind.

When I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, I acknowledged Him to be God incarnate, God made flesh and blood. But in the seminary, while studying theology all the scientific training my mind had received in the university came back to me in a demand that I find a natural basis for the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. It goes without saying that my limited intelligence failed to find it, but, instead, I believe I found something else that is of more practical benefit. I learned that our distinctions between the natural and the supernatural are only man-made, that the only natural things are the things of God, that God is within all nature and back of all nature.

And from this realization I have been led to discover another great truth. Not only was God incarnated in Jesus Christ but that only by incarnation can God make Himself known to us; that the fact of incarnation is more than a unique supernatural act of the Almighty, it is also a universal and natural law of being. And as such I wish to consider it with you for a while this morning.

Nothing is of value to us until it becomes flesh and dwells among us.

1. What is human life itself? A prinnip1e? An energy? Yes, but how could we know it apart from its manifestation in f1esh and blood? You say that the body returns to the dust whence it came, but the spirit unto God who gave it." Yes, but had not the Spirit been incarnated in that body it never would have beeome known to us.

Had Christ never become flesh, his glory, his beauty and his power never would have become a fact to us, or a rea1ity in any shape or form.

3. Take the ordinary virtues. What is honesty apart from the honest man? Nothing. There is no virtue in honesty; there is virtue only in an honest man. Honesty must become flesh and dwell among us.

The same is true of all the other virtues and of all the vices as well. There is no such thing as non-personal immorality. There are just immoral men and women. Immorality is incarnated vice.

5. Incarnation applied to conduct. We speak of this or that good or bad principle. But principles are neither good nor bad in themselves. They become so only as they are made into the flesh of men and women. No thing is either good or bad in itself, only as it relates itself to man does it become so. No thing is right or wrong: only man is right or wrong.

The Ten Commandments mean nothing until they become flesh and dwell among us.

4. Incarnation is the same when applied to religion. The pharisees made elaborate statement of their religion but they failed to work it out in personal living. They strained at a gnat but swallowed a camel.

The Christian Church, in large measure, has been guilty of the same thing. The church has formulated its creeds and has placed the emphasis upon their acceptance, instead of interpreting religion in terms of incarnation, placing the emphasis upon the actual living of it.

Martin Luther's primary object in leaving the Catholic Church was the moral regeneration of the church, not the formulating of new doctrines.

The Spirit and the Flesh and not two but one. Apart from the flesh there can be no manifestation of the Spirit in humanity. The faith that saves is not a mental theory or an intellectual assent, but a personalized spiritual dynamic. It is not an ecclesiastical creed but a personal conviction. Your real faith is not what you talk about or profess in words, but what you actuall live by. True faith cannot be written on paper, it can only be throbbed out of your heart.

The same with prayer. Prayer is never said, it is always breathed. God never hears prayers, He just hears his children praying. Prayer is not an act but a communion. The ~~pharisee~~ Pharisee only said his prayers and missed the blessing of the Lord, whereas the sinner throbbed his prayer out of an aching heart. The prayer of the Pharisee was made words; the prayer of the sinner was

made flesh. To pray in Spirit and in Truth is to pray with your very heart blood.

Likewise with church membership. For making out our reports we count the membership of the church on the church roll. But membership in the church is not a matter of record, it is a matter of experience. To make your membership amount to anything you must you must see to it that it becomes flesh and dwells among us. Your membership must be more than an ecclesiastical standing, it must be a burning and a shining light. The real test of membership is found in its incarnation and is manifest in home and school and office and workshop

Christian service is no exception. Jesus spent little time talking about his duties, he kept himself busy performing them. The priest and the Levite, if taken aside, would have expressed themselves just as sympathetic for the poor and the needy as that "certain Samarita But the difference lay in the fact that the good Samarita moved himself to action when the need for it presented itself, whereas, the other two passed it by on the other side.

Thus we see that the Kingdom of God is not something formulated by theologians; it is something made flesh and bloo by the followers of Christ on the highway of human life. Xty is still being made. The process of its incarnation is going on all the time. Just as there is no Xty without the blood of Christ so there is no Xty without the blood of men. "Ye shall see the truth and the truth shall make you free" when it becomes incarnated within you. Jesus puts it correctly,"I am the truth."

Right here we discover the difference between nominal Xns and actual ones.

Ask 100 persons,"Do you believe in Jesus Christ?" and 95 will answer "yes". But aak them,"Are you living in actual personal union with Christ?", and you will get many less affirmative answers. Their belief is not made flesh, and is not, therefore, a governing power in their lives. "Not everyone that saith unto me,"Lord, Lord b but he that doeth the will of my Father in Heaven

A theologial has said that Xty is the saving power of God in Christ. He is mistaken. Xty is not that power but a Xn is. Until Xty becomes flesh in the daily life of Christ's followers it is just an echo, a picture, a mere statement.

We commonly speak of the Scriptures as being "THE WORD OF GOD". They are no such thing. They are but the records of history.

Food is not the same thing to the man who doesint eat it as it is to the man who does eat it. To the one who does'nt eat it the food is but vegetable and animal matter, but to the one who does eat it it becomes a matter of bone and tissue and fleah and blood. It is the same with the Bible. The Bible is not the same book to the man who neglects to read it as it is to the man who absorbs it into his daily life. The Bible is but a mere composition of words and ideals, useless and valueless until absorbed and assimilated into our very souls. There is no Word of God to anyone but to the man to whom the Bible has become bone and tissue and flesh and blood. You can accept the Bible but you cannot accept the Word of God. You can carry the Bible around in your pocket but not the Word of God. You can commit the Bible to memory but not the Word of God. God incarnates His word in you. You can only possess it by living it.

Conclusion- Jesus Christ is no longer in the flesh, but His Spirit is- He is being incarnated in the lives of all his true followers- The Word is still being made flesh and is dwelling among us.

By God's process of incarnation

Democracy is being born into the world of humanity

We have National Prohibition and soon we shall have a generation of Americans in whom is incarnated sobriety.

Thus the Golden Rule will eventually be incarnated in business and society.

God's Kingdom of justice and love, thru incarnation, will be brot from heaven and established over all the earth.